

I.

"I strive, & keep my head above water."

The arms of one of the provinces of Holland is a lion, swimming, with the above motto - a device which might ^{aptly} be ~~very~~ ^{aptly} applied to the whole country. A large part of ~~Holland~~ ^{wherein} is a delta, formed of the mud deposited by the Rhine & other rivers in the same manner as the delta of Egypt has been formed by the Nile. Much of it is mud driven up by the sea, ~~in return for what it~~ ~~gives~~ ~~from the parts of the coast~~. A spoil, rescued from the waters by the continued efforts & ingenuity of man, was this barren land removed, but for six months, without doubt the waves would gain their ancient dominion; so much of the land lies below the level of the sea. ~~Fast waters of sand & mud banks, quite uninhabitable such as now lie at the mouths of the Rhine & Mississippi would~~ ~~then~~ occupy nearly the whole of this most populous & busy state.

Holland is, in many ways, the most wonderful country under the sun.
Now,

houses are "built upon the sand" & do
stand: not only houses, but cities;
Amsterdam & Rotterdam have no
other foundation. ~~From sand & stone~~
~~L other~~ ~~foundations~~ ~~laid~~ ~~for~~
the morasses, with which piles are driven
through many feet of bog earth - millions
of solid beams, which, hidden, under
ground, support the crowded buildings
of these large cities.

We speak contemptuously of anything
held together by straws, yet a long line
of coast of several provinces is consolida-
ted by no other means than a few
reeds intermixed with straw wisps
or woven into mats. ~~Without this frail~~
~~but~~ ~~essential~~ ~~support~~, the people dump
or sand-hills, would be driven about
into the interior, & would overwhelm whole
districts of cultivated land. In Holland
the laws of nature seem to be reversed; the
^{the rivers are} sea is higher than the land; the lowest
~~ground in the country is 4 or 5 feet~~
~~below high water mark.~~ ⁱⁿ no other
country do the keels of the ships float
above the chimneys of the houses, & no
where else does the frog croaking among
the bulrushes, look down upon the
swallow on the house-top.

Where rivers take their course, it is
not in beds of their own choosing; they
are

204
veneration. These birds are not only
never injured or disturbed, but a
cart-wheel or some other contrivance
is often placed on the house-top for
their use - partly that the bird may not
build so in the chimney itself as
as to stop it up. Their large nests are
to be seen on the edge of a gable or near
a chimney on the roofs of farm
houses, & even in the town a good
number for the dwellers therein when
the storks build on a roof, & to kill
one of these birds would be thought
little less than a crime. The storks
usually migrate southwards in
August & return in May - the old
ones, to their former nests. During
a great fire which raged, in 1536, in
the town of Delft, the storks were seen
bearing away their young ones from
their nest through the midst of the
flames, & where they could not effect
this, perishing with the ^{glodging} ~~young~~. They
could not save. Every species of
birds religiously protected from injury,
& bird-nesting is prohibited by law;
for the birds eat the insects which
would destroy the produce which bind
the sea defences.

Immense

Peter slept when he worked as a shipwright
at Amsterdam. The armour of Admiral
Trump, with its bullet marks; the grey
leather doublet, sprinkled with blood,
which William ~~Prince~~ of Orange wore in
the day when he was murdered at Delft.
The picture gallery is ~~the~~ most interesting
collection; it is confined almost entirely
to the works of the Dutch masters - Paul
Potter's Young Bull, which has been valued
at £5,000, & Rembrandt's Cow drinking.
& Gerard Joris's Woman with her baby in
a cradle, & many other famous pictures.
Not the least curious thing about Holland
is that a great School of painting should
have been developed in a land which
contains so little to please the
imagination: but the Dutch pictures
are hardly works of imagination; they
are usually small pictures of quite
homely subjects - a market woman with
a hare in her hand, a man blowing a
vumpet, or a boy blowing bubbles, a
view of the inside or outside of a church,
an old woman peeling potatoes: - ~~These~~
~~pictures are~~ delightful, ~~only~~ because they are
such true imitations of life & nature as they
appear in homely Holland; ~~beautifully~~
~~drawn, wonderfully coloured, they please the~~
~~eye, though they are without the poetic feeling which~~
should

John Van der Does, the Boerformaster - chief
magistrate - was Pieter Van der Werf; hero,
& patriot, both, worthy to rule this city of
Graaff-Reyn. When Van der Does was urged by
Valdey to surrender, he replied for himself
& his townsmen, "When provisions fail us
we will devour our left hands, & recover
our right to defend our liberty." For
nearly four months the inhabitants had
held out without murmuring, even
women & children taking a share
in the defence. For seven weeks bread
had not been seen within the walls; horses,
cats, & dogs, roots and leaves, were eagerly
devoured. Their principal outposts in vain
tried to throw in provisions & they
besieged, so strictly was the blockade
maintained. Pestilence came in
the train of famine, & carried off the
people so fast, that the starving beings
who were spared were scarcely able to
bury their dead.

At length two carrier pigeons flew
into the town - gentle messengers bearing
good news. The Prince of Orange had
determined to cut the dykes of the
Maas & Gevel to relieve the heroic town.
As this fearful alternative could not be
resorted to without involving in total ruin
the whole province of Holland, it is no
wonder it was only adopted after much hesitation
& as a last resource. The dykes, once cut
the country would be flooded, the Spanish
army.

army submerged, & boats laden with provisions, ^{men} would be able to reach the walls of the furnished city. The dykes were cut, the country between forde, Port, Rotterdam & Leyden was submerged, but, alas, only to the depth of a few feet; the 200 boats, sent by the Prince of Orange for their relief, were in sight of the inhabitants, but could get no nearer, - the water was not deep enough. The wind was unfavourable; so long as the easterly breeze prevailed, they ~~felt~~ ^{knelt}, as they anxiously ~~stood~~ ^{gazed from} towers & house-tops that they must look in vain for the welcome ocean.

Yet, while thus patiently waiting, they were literally starving; for even the ~~strong~~ ordered at Haaplem laid not ~~reached~~ that depth of intensity of agony to which Leyden was now reduced. Mothers & children, all day long, were seen searching gutters & dung-hills for morsels of food. ~~They~~ ~~desperately~~ ~~fiercely~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~infants~~ starved to death on their mothers' breasts; mothers dropped dead in the streets with their dead children in their arms.

In many a house the wretched, in their rooms, found a whole family of corpses - father, mother, children - side by side. Pestilence stalked all noon day through the city, & the doomed inhabitants fell like grass before his scythe. From six thousand to eight thousand human beings fell ~~sank~~ ^{sank} before this scourge alone; yet the

the people resolutely held out, women & men,
mutually encouraging each other to resist
the entrance of their foreign foe - an evil
more horrible than pest or famine.
Leyden was sublime in its despair. A
few murmurs were, however, occasionally
heard at the steadfastness of the
magistrates: & a dead body was placed
at the door of the Burghmaster as a silent
witness against his inflexibility. A
party of the more faint-hearted even,
assailed the heroic Pieter Van der Werf
with threats & reproaches as he passed along
the streets. A crowd had gathered around
him by the Church of St. Pancras: there
stood the Burghmaster, a tall, haggard, imposing
figure, with dark visage & a tranquil but
commanding eye. He waved his broad hand
telling for silence, & then exclaimed,
"What would ye my friends? Why do ye
murmur that we do not break our vows
& surrender the city to the Spaniards?
a fate more horrible than the agony which
she now endures. I tell you I have made
an oath to hold the city; & may God give
me strength to keep my oath. Your
menaces move me not. My life is at
your disposal. Here is my sword; plunge
it into my breast, & divide my flesh
among you. Take my body to appease your
hunger but expect no surrender so long as

"I remain alive."

The crowd fell back in silence; ~~but~~ happily their misery was now nearly at an end. The wind changed to the north-west. Avoiding the tide up the river - a violent equinoctial gale, which presently shifted & blew with still more violence from the south-west. The waters of the North Sea were piled in vast masses upon the southern coast of Holland, & then dashed furiously landward, the ocean rising over the earth & sweeping with unrestrained power across the ruined dykes. The inundation spread to the walls of Leyden with such suddenness that the Spanish camp, were surrounded, & more than ~~the~~ a thousand of their soldiers were overwhelmed in the flood. The same tide which swept them away, carried the flotilla of boats, laden with provisions to the gates of Leyden. Before the inhabitants were relieved, one more anxious night, a pitch-dark night followed; there were no lights, & strange sounds, & a terrible crash as of falling walls. The horror struck citizens fought the Spaniards were upon them at last. Day dawned at length. Within the fortresses reigned a death-like stillness, which inspired a sickening suspicion. Had the city indeed been carried ⁱⁿ.